

TO THE CHAIRMAN & MEMBERS
OF THE
EAST STOW RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

LADIES & GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting to you my Second Annual Report on the Health of the East Stow Rural District for the year 1898.

VITAL STATISTICS.

I have estimated the population of the District to the middle of the year 1898 at 6106, and based the following statistics on that estimate.

BIRTH RATE.

The number of Births registered was 167, 97 males and 70 females, of this number 7 occurred in the Workhouse and of these 1 belonged to Stowmarket and 3 to the Thedwastro District, so that the corrected number of Births for the East Stow District is 163, which gives a Birth Rate of 26.6 per 1000; compared with 27.5 last year and 31.5 the year before, so that the decrease in the Birth Rate noticed last year still continues.

DEATH RATE.

There were 115 Deaths registered during the year, 20 occurred in the Workhouse, and of these 6 belonged to Stowmarket, and 6 to the Thedwastro District, therefore the correct number of Deaths for the East Stow District is 103, giving a Death Rate of 16.8 per 1000; compared with 17.1 last year and 13.2 the year before.

Although the Death Rate appears to be decreasing it is still very high indeed for a Rural District, and is in fact, the highest Death Rate in the Rural Districts of East Suffolk. The Death Rate for the whole of East Suffolk last year was 14.5 per 1000.

INFANT MORTALITY.

There were 26 Deaths of Infants under one year, 1 of these occurred in the Workhouse and really belonged to Stowmarket, making the correct number 25, and giving a mortality of 154.6 per 1000 Births, compared with 113 last year and 114.5 the year before. A large percentage of these deaths is caused by bad feeding and insanitary surroundings.

ZYMOTIC DEATH RATE.

There were 11 Deaths caused by the seven principal Zymotic Diseases, giving a Zymotic Death Rate of 1.8 per 1000.

This Death Rate for East Suffolk last year was .8 per 1000. The epidemics of Whooping Cough and Measles were the chief cause of this high Death Rate.

TUBERCULAR DISEASES.

During the year there were 15 Deaths from Tubercular Diseases, including 11 due to Phthisis, compared with 6 last year and 8 the year before.

Recently special attention has been drawn to these Diseases by the National Association for the prevention of Tuberculosis.

Tubercular Diseases, which include Consumption, Tubercular Meningitis, Scrofula, &c., are all infectious, and therefore preventible, and not, as is popularly believed, hereditary.

They are caused by a certain bacillus either entering the system by the food (e. g. infected milk or meat), or with the breath (through the dust in the air containing the dried expectoration of consumptives).

Therefore houses in which Deaths have occurred from consumption ought to be disinfected; and those suffering, should in the interests of others, absolutely destroy or properly disinfect their expectoration; and in their own interests see that their homes are properly ventilated day and night.

I mention this specially because I so often find bed-rooms in the cottages without fire-places, and as a rule windows which do not open.

Milk taken by people inheriting a tendency to weak lungs should always be sterilized or boiled.

OTHER DEATHS.

There were 21 Deaths caused by Bronchial Complaints, 12 due to Heart Disease, 4 to Cancer, and 3 Inquests were held.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year 40 cases of Infectious Diseases were reported, compared with 43 last year and 90 the year before.

It is to be regretted that in our District we have neither an Isolation Hospital, nor a proper Disinfecting Apparatus. The necessity for both of these has been under discussion, so that I hope these wants will be supplied shortly.

TABLE A.—Shows the mortality from all causes and at different ages.

TABLE B.—Shows the Population, registered Births and new cases of Infectious Diseases notified.

I also attach a Plan of an INFECTIOUS DISEASES HOSPITAL recommended by the Local Government Board, suitable for this District.

SCARLET FEVER.

There were 22 cases of Scarlet Fever reported during the year, compared with 23 last year and 68 the year before. There were no Deaths (3 of the 22 cases this year were imported).

DIPHTHERIA.

There were 14 cases of Diphtheria reported, compared with 10 last year and 9 the year before. Seven of these occurred in one cottage at Harleston; 1 was imported and the others were scattered over 4 villages, and apparently had no connection with each other. There were no deaths. Various sanitary defects were discovered on inspection.

TYPHOID FEVER.

Three cases of Typhoid Fever were reported in 3 different villages. There were no Deaths. Drains and cesspools were found to be defective.

ERYSIPelas.

Only 1 case was reported.

The following details have reference to the Villages of the District. The figures in brackets represent the population at last census:—

BUXHALL (424).

There were 5 Deaths, compared with 2 last year. One Death was due to Phthisis, 3 were of persons over 65 years of age,

There were 7 Births compared with 10 last year.

Four cases of Scarlet Fever, 1 of Typhoid, and 3 of Diphtheria were reported.

With regard to the Typhoid Fever case the drains were found to be blocked and untrapped. Notice was served on the owner and the defects remedied.

With regard to the 3 cases of Diphtheria—1 house had no drains, and the drains belonging to the other two houses were defective. The owners were served with notices, and the defects remedied.

COMBS (1183).

There were 15 Deaths compared with 14 last year. Three were of infants under one year, and of the remainder only one person was over 65. There were 3 Deaths from Phthisis.

There were 44 Births compared with 36 last year.

There were 11 cases of Scarlet Fever, 1 of Diphtheria and 1 of Erysipelas reported.

The following nuisances were discovered and remedied:—

Drainage from a manure heap running into a ditch, adjoining a pond, used for drinking purposes.

Case of over-crowding at the Ford where a man, woman and 5 children slept in one small room.

The cesspools to 4 cottages at the Ford were found in a foul state and drains blocked.

Two ponds (Mudds and Spring) were found to be polluted, and they were cleaned out but are not fit for drinking purposes. Some of the other ponds were cleaned out in August.

CREETING (248).

There were 4 Deaths compared with 5 last year, 3 were of persons over 70 years of age.

There were 6 Births compared with 7 last year.

No Infectious Diseases were reported.

Complaints were received with reference to the water from the new well because it contains too much iron, this will be remedied shortly, by pumping the water into reservoirs and allowing it to settle.

FINBOROUGH MAGNA & PARVA (506).

There were 5 Deaths compared with 8 last year.

There were 6 Births compared with 10 last year.

There were 3 cases of Scarlet Fever, 1 of Diphtheria and 1 of Typhoid ; with regard to the last the drains were found to be defective.

The water in the pond on Hitcham Road was pumped out, and the ditch leading to the pond was covered in and laid with glazed pipes.

GIPPING (45).

There were 2 Deaths this year and none last.

There was one Birth compared with 3 last year.

HARLESTON (78).

There was 1 Death compared with 3 last year.

There were 3 Births compared with 1 last year.

There were 7 cases of Diphtheria reported ; these all occurred in one cottage on the Green, the walls and floor were damp, and there was a filthy ditch at the back of, and close to the cottage. Four cases of Diphtheria died in this house in 1891.

A shallow well has been sunk on the Green, by the landlord, giving a fair supply of water, but as the water is not free from suspicion it should be boiled before use.

HAUGHLEY (859).

There were 12 Deaths compared with 15 last year ; 4 of these were of infants under 1 year, and 6 were of persons over 65.

There were 29 Births compared with 15 last year.

Two cases of Diphtheria were reported.

One cottage was found on inspection to be in a filthy condition and the owner was ordered to have it thoroughly cleansed.

During the year I had occasion to point out to the Council the insanitary condition of the surface drainage, and disinfectants were ordered to be used, but hiding smells by disinfectants is a very indifferent substitute for a proper system of surface drainage. Open gutters beside the road for this purpose are quite out of date, besides being a source of danger to the Public Health.

The public pump, on account of the scarcity of water, had to be locked up, except for 3 hours each day during September and October.

OLD NEWTON (672).

There were 16 Deaths registered compared with 15 last year ; 5 were of infants under 1 year—2 were caused by Measles and 2 by Whooping Cough—only 3 were of persons over 65 years of age.

There were 21 Births compared with 16 last year.

During the year the artesian well at the Mutton Corner has been finished and gives a good supply of pure water. With regard to the ponds, they were well filled up till the end of the summer. The Brown Street pond in November was found to be polluted, it was pumped out and thoroughly cleansed, and earlier in the year the pond in Chapel Street had to be repaired.

ONEHOUSE (98).

There were no Deaths compared with 2 last year.

There were 2 Births compared with 3 last year.

SHELLAND (90).

There was 1 Death this year and 1 last year.

There was 1 Birth this year compared with 2 last year.

WETHERDEN (452).

There were 14 Deaths compared with 5 last year, 3 of them were of infants, and half the number were of children, 5 were of persons over 65 ; 3 were caused by Whooping Cough and 2 by Phthisis.

There were 4 Births compared with 12 last year.

A case of nuisance caused by slaughtering pigs on improper premises was remedied. Another case of nuisance was caused by the drainage of 8 cottages running into an open ditch at the side of the road, this has since been remedied.

STOWUPLAND (1250).

There were 20 Deaths compared with 17 last year, 9 were of infants, 2 only were of persons over 65 ; 1 was caused by Whooping Cough, 2 by Phthisis, and 1 by Rheumatic Fever.

There were 38 Births compared with 49 last year.

There were 4 cases of Scarlet Fever and 1 of Typhoid Fever notified ; in the latter case the house drains were found to be defective, and were repaired.

Two wells were found to be polluted in Creeting Road and were closed, the houses being supplied with water by the Waterworks Company.

A ditch in Mill Street was in a very foul state, causing a nuisance, and the owner had to be served with notice to abate the same.

Up till April the ponds were fairly full, in May several of them had to be cleaned out on account of weeds, and the Saxham Street pond had a very disagreeable odour.

In September and October some of the pumps had to be locked up, except for 2 hours each day, through scarcity of water. Many complaints were received by the Sanitary Inspector concerning the want of water.

UNION WORKHOUSE.

There were 20 Deaths in the Workhouse during the year, 14 being of persons over 70 years of age; 2 of them belonged to Combs, 2 to Stowupland, 1 to Old Newton, 1 to Gipping and 1 to Shelland; 6 belonged to Stowmarket and 6 to the Thedwastre District.

There were 7 Births registered, 1 belonged to Haughley, 1 to Stowupland and 1 to Combs, 1 to Stowmarket and 3 to the Thedwastre District.

These Births and Deaths are not included in those already given under each parish.

Finally the Water Supply of all the Villages except Creeting and Old Newton is very unsatisfactory. The usefulness of the 2 wells in these Villages, giving as they do a very large supply of good drinking water, would be largely increased if they were made to supply different parts of the District by gravitation. This has been done in Essex with financial success, and if this can be done in Essex, it can also be done in Suffolk.

To the want of a good water supply together with damp, ill-ventilated cottages and their insanitary surroundings I attribute the high Death Rate, especially the Infant Mortality which is very excessive at Old Newton, Wetherden and Stowupland.

SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS, &c.

A good water supply has been provided for Creeting and Old Newton.

Waterworks water has been laid on to seven houses in Creeting Road.

Two polluted wells were closed. The Scheme for the Sewerage of Combs and Stowupland is nearly finished, and will be in working order by about next March.

The Sanitary Inspector has during the year disinfected 14 houses in the District, and 28 different kinds of nuisances have been detected and abated.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge the willing help I have received from the Sanitary Inspector, and to thank the Chairman and Members for the considerate manner in which they have always received my suggestions.

I have the honour to remain, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

CHAS. W. LOW, M.B., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health.

